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Bush Contends That Sorensen Could Have Handled CIA Job

By ROBERT B. STEPNO
NEW HAVEN — Theodore C. Sorensen, President Carter's first nominee for CIA director, "could have done the job in good shape" if opposition had not forced his withdrawal as a candidate, former CIA Director George Bush said Wednesday.

Bush, former Republican National Committee chairman, told a press conference at Yale University that he hadn't been asked to stay on as interim director. He also said whoever is named director will have the respect of the CIA.

The former director said he knew of no CIA attempt to fight Sorensen's appointment.

Bush, who left the director's job last week, said he was "very much impressed" with Carter's grasp of national security matters. He said he doesn't see the withdrawal of Sorensen's nomination as a sign of weakness.

He also said the next director should be "one who's sensitive to the constitutional rights of Americans," but added that either a liberal or conservative could fit that description.

What really is needed is someone in whom the president has confidence, and who can be on equal footing with the secretaries of State and Defense in bringing information to the president without "policy restraints," Bush said.

Bush said "an awful lot of reform" took place during his year as CIA director, in response to charges that the CIA abused its powers.

"Continued alertness" is needed under the new administration, but leadership is really the key Bush said.

Bush said he doesn't think the CIA's effectiveness was hurt by Congressional inquiries and



GEORGE BUSH (UPI)

confidential information. He added, however, that it's impossible to tell if informants are holding back information for fear their identities will become known.

Bush said whoever gets the CIA post will be "pretty

lucky." He said the job was "the most challenging, the most exciting and in a way the most rewarding that I've had."

He has been U.S. liaison in the People's Republic of China and permanent representative to the United Nations. He also served two terms in the House of Representatives.

The son of the late U.S. Sen. Prescott Bush, R-Conn., Bush made a fortune in Texas oil between being graduated from Yale and entering politics.

He said he is returning to Houston now that his service to the Nixon-Ford administrations is over, but he has not lost interest in public service, politics and foreign policy.

He is visiting Yale's Timothy Dwight College this week as a Chubb Fellow.